

Remarks/Arguments

Claim Summary

By this Amendment, claims 17-18, 25-26, 28, 32 and 36-37 have been revised. Claims 17-38 remain pending in the application.

35 U.S.C. §112, first paragraph

Applicants have carefully considered the Examiner's comments in connection with the rejection under 35 U.S.C. §112, first paragraph, and claims 28 and 32 have been revised accordingly.

In particular, claim 28 now recites rotating the predetermined area of the component while the predetermined area of said component is juxtaposed with the supply member of the oil repellent supply apparatus and the removal member of the oil repellent removal. Such rotation is clearly described throughout the present specification. See, for example, paragraphs [0047] and [0048] of the present specification.

Applicants thus respectfully request reconsideration of the rejection under 35 U.S.C. §112, first paragraph.

35 U.S.C. §102

Claims 17-22 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102 as being anticipated by Iwamoto (JP 2001232289). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection with respect to the now-pending claims.

In the Office Action, the Examiner states:

“[Iwamoto teaches that] the oil repellent can be shaken off, whereby it is automatically coated evenly on the heteromorphic inner diameter portion 5a of the bearing

component (i.e. moving the predetermined area of said component and the supply member of the oil repellent supply apparatus relative to one another to thereby coat the predetermined area”

By this Amendment, independent claim 17 has been revised to more clearly define over the Examiner’s interpretation of Iwamoto, i.e., to further clarify that the relative movement of the bearing component occurs while the solution of oil repellent is being supplied onto the component. Iwamoto clearly fails to teach or suggest at least this aspect of claim 17.

That is, at paragraph [0017], Iwamoto teaches that:

“When this [gap filled] state is attained, the supply of the oil-repellant agent is interrupted, and the ring-shaped bearing-constituting component 5 is dismantled from the coating heads 10a to 10e by a worker. Although the bearing-constituting component thus dismantled has a surplus of oil-repellent agent remaining in the heteromorphic inner diameter portion 5a thereof, the oil-repellent agent can be shaken off” (Emphasis added.)

Thus, according to Iwamoto, the alleged “movement” (i.e., shaking off) clearly occurs after the supply of oil repellent has been stopped and the component dismantled from the supply apparatus.

For at least these reasons, Applicants respectfully contend that claim 17, and the claims 18-22 dependent thereon, are not anticipated by the teachings of Iwamoto.

35 U.S.C. §103

Dependent claims 23-27 were variously rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103 as being unpatentable over Iwamoto in view of Jefferson et al. (US 6056822) or Fujimoto et al. (US 2001/0025890) or Isayama et al. (US 4050078).

Without acquiescing to the Examiner's reasoning in combining the teachings of the applied references, Applicants respectfully traverse these rejections for the same reasons as stated above in connection with the rejection of independent claim 17 under 35 U.S.C. §102. That is, even if Iwamoto was somehow modified as suggested by the Examiner, the resultant would not include relative movement of the bearing component while the solution of oil repellent is being supplied onto the component.

In addition, it is noted that dependent claim 25 (and 26) has been amended herein to clarify the removal of the excess oil repellent includes applying a suctioning air current to the predetermined area of the component to suction some of the solution of oil repellent from the predetermined area of the component. (Support for this can be found at least at paragraph [0048] of the present specification.)

In the Office Action, the Examiner relies on Fujimoto et al. as teaching "a suction step for sucking the treatment solution." However, as apparently acknowledged by the Examiner, the suction of Fujimoto et al. is for drawing treatment solution from a container, not for suctioning the solution directly from a workpiece.

For at least the reasons stated above, Applicants respectfully contend that 23-27, as a whole, would not have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art in view of the teachings of the cited references, taken individually or in combination.

Conclusion

No other issues remaining, reconsideration and favorable action upon the claims 17-38 now pending in the application are respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,
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